

upon and above the *mimus*, and has the character of a high product which could be maintained only in a peaceful and prosperous society whose other literary and artistic products were of a high grade. With a failure of societal power the highest products disappeared first, but the low and vulgar *mimus*, which had been disregarded but had amused the crowd during prosperity, continued to exist. In the third, fourth, and fifth centuries the *mimus* existed throughout the Roman world and was very popular. In the fifth century it flourished at Ravenna, and perhaps it continued later in the same form as in the East. It can be traced in Italy in the sixth century, after which its existence is doubtful. In the seventh century the theater was a thing of the past, but the *mimus* still existed. The ascetics of Charlemagne's time disapproved of it and got legislation against it, but the laws were of no avail. The ecclesiastics were fond of the *mimus*. It was in the hands of strolling players of the humblest kind. It coarsened with the general decay. All court festivals needed the *mimus* for the festivities.¹

646. Drama in the Orient. There is no drama in Mohammedan literature and it appears that there is no original drama in the Orient.² The *mimus* declined in the West in the disaster of the fifth century, but in the Byzantine empire it lasted until the Turkish conquest, so that it appears that if there is any historical connection between modern and ancient drama it must be through Byzantium.³ The actors at Byzantium kept a certain traditional license in the face of the emperor and court which was not without social and political value.⁴

647. Marionettes. Marionettes are mentioned in Xenophon's

Symposium. They were of more ancient origin. The puppet play was used as a means of burlesquing the legitimate theater and drama. It passed to the Turks as the puppet shadow play, in which the hero Karagoz is the same as Punch in figure, character, and acts. This puppet play spread all over the Eastern world. Lane⁵ says of it in Egypt, in the first half of the nineteenth century, that it was very indecent. Reich⁶ describes

¹ Reich, *Der Mimus*, 785-810.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 48, 133.

⁵ *Mod. Egypt*, II, 125.

² *Ibid.*, 622.

* *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶ *Der Mimus*, 656.